

Amendments to the Claims:

Claims 35-40 have been amended as shown below. Underlines indicate insertions; strikeouts or double brackets [[]] indicate deletions.

1-24. (Cancelled)

25. (Previously presented). The apparatus of claim 29 wherein the first guide strip is spaced apart from about 1 to about 3.5 times the thickness of the web.

26. (Previously presented). The apparatus of claim 29 wherein the second guide strip is spaced apart from about 3.5 times to about 10 times the thickness of the web.

27-28. (Cancelled)

29. (Previously presented). A trim press article handling apparatus for guiding a web having articles formed therein between coacting cutting dies, comprising:

a treadle including a web guide plate and a pair of guide strips configured to guide the web along the plate and between adjacent articles to align the articles relative to the coacting cutting dies, the first guide strip provided on a first guide member and spaced from the plate at most 3.5 times a thickness of the web and the second guide strip provided

on a second guide member and spaced from the plate at least 3.5 times the thickness of the web; and

an article detector having an optical emitter and an optical detector, the optical emitter is carried by one of the first guide member and the second guide member, and the detector is carried by another of the first guide member and the second guide member, the article detector carried by the treadle and configured to detect position of the articles relative to the coacting cutting dies by receiving a light signal from the emitter when an article is conveyed through a path of the light signal to trigger detection of the article.

30. (Previously presented). The apparatus of claim 29 further comprising at least one cross member carried by the guide plate and at least one quick release adjustment collar provided on one or more of the first guide member and the second guide member for securing and releasing the respective guide member to align the respective guide strip relative to the guide plate.

31. (Previously presented). The apparatus of claim 29 wherein the second guide strip is spaced from the plate a substantially greater amount than the space provided between the first guide strip and the plate to minimize frictional forces generated between the second guide strip, the plate, and web-supported articles being conveyed therebetween.

32. (Previously presented). The apparatus of claim 29 wherein the first guide strip and the second guide strip are supported for adjustable lateral repositioning relative to one another along the guide plate.

33. (Previously presented). The apparatus of claim 29 wherein the first guide strip is substantially parallel with the guide plate.

34. (Previously presented). The apparatus of claim 29 wherein the first guide strip has a straight edge configured opposite the guide plate.

35. (Currently amended) ~~An article trim press~~ A web handling apparatus for guiding articles to be trimmed from a thermoformed web, comprising:
a treadle having a web guide plate and a pair of guide strips configured to guide a web of articles for delivery between coacting cutting dies of a trim press, the first guide strip spaced from the guide plate at most 3.5 times a thickness of the web and the second guide strip spaced from the plate at least 3.5 times the thickness of the web; and
an article detector having an optical emitter and ~~[[a]]~~ an optical detector, the emitter carried in association with one of the guide strips and the detector carried in association with another of the guide strips, the article detector configured to detect position of articles in the web relative to the coacting cutting dies by receiving a signal at

the detector from the emitter when an article is conveyed through a light path between the emitter and the detector to trigger detection of the article.

36. (Currently amended) The ~~article trim press~~ web handling apparatus of claim 35 wherein the emitter ~~comprises an optical emitter~~ and the detector ~~comprises an optical detector~~ are each supported in a stationary position by a respective one of the guide strips.

37. (Currently amended) The ~~article trim press~~ web handling apparatus of claim 35 wherein the first guide strip is spaced apart from the web guide plate from about 1 to about 3.5 times the thickness of the web.

38. (Currently amended) The ~~article trim press~~ web handling apparatus of claim 37 wherein the second guide strip is spaced apart from the web guide plate from about 3.5 times to about 10 times the thickness of the web.

39. (Currently amended) The ~~article trim press~~ web handling apparatus of claim 35 wherein the first guide strip is carried from the treadle by a first guide member and the second guide strip is carried from the treadle by a second guide member spaced from the first guide member.

40. (Currently amended) The ~~article trim press~~ web handling apparatus of claim 39 wherein the treadle further comprises at least one support member carried by the guide plate and at least one release mechanism provided on one or more of the first guide member and the second guide member configured to secure and release the respective guide member relative to the treadle to align the respective guide strip relative to the guide plate.